

unit (30) which in a test mode causes the appliance to operate its test status indicator, without operating the alarm indicator. The Examiner refers to column 4, lines 6-19 of Fierro to support the rejection.

Fierro discloses an interface unit interposed between a central alarm panel and a string of smoke detectors interconnected by a three-wire bus. Two wires of the bus carry AC power and the third wire is an interunit signalling wire. When an individual detector senses a smoke condition, it places a voltage on the signalling wire. The other detectors sound their alarms upon detecting this voltage. The interface unit senses this voltage and notifies the central alarm panel. The interface unit includes a test button which, when actuated, disables communications to the central alarm panel for a predetermined period of time. During this time, the interface unit places a periodic signal on the signalling wire, which causes all of the detectors to "beep" while that signal is present. (see Abstract; see also column 6, lines 18-24)(emphasis added.)

In contrast, the present invention of base Claims 1 and 5 relates to an alarm method and system in which the normal operation of notification appliances can be tested by causing a test status indicator at one or more selected notification appliances to be operated for subsequent verification by a technician or operator and without operating its associated alarm indicator so as to avoid disrupting the building occupants. That is, the proper operation of the notification appliances is being tested. Such verification can include, for example, checking that the programming of alarm indicators is correct or troubleshooting a faulty notification appliance. The test status indicator of the present invention at the appliance itself is used to aid a technician during testing and verification of the system.

In order to anticipate a claim, a reference must disclose each recited element of the claim. There is no disclosure in Fierro relating to verification of plural notification appliances that can communicate with, and be selected by, a system controller for operation as claimed in base Claims 1 and 5. There is no selection capability disclosed in Fierro. Rather, at most Fierro discloses audible alarms 24 at the smoke detectors 10 which are controlled in common. Indeed, as noted in the abstract of Fierro, "the interface unit places a periodic signal on the signalling wire, which causes all of the detectors to 'beep' while that signal is present." Thus, Fierro does

not disclose the recited (Claim 1)(emphasis added):

selecting at the system controller which notification appliances to operate; and  
communicating from the system controller to each selected notification appliance  
an instruction to operate its associated test status indicator for verification without  
operating its associated alarm indicator so as to avoid disrupting the building  
occupants.

Likewise, Fierro does not disclose the recited (Claim 5)(emphasis added):

a system controller connected to the plural notification appliances, the system controller  
in a test mode selecting which notification appliances to operate and communicating to  
each selected notification appliance an instruction to operate its associated test status  
indicator for verification without operating its associated alarm indicator.

Therefore, base Claims 1 and 5 are believed to be patentable over Fierro.

Base Claims 14 and 17 are directed to a test mode which uses a locally-activated switch at a notification appliance. By providing a magnetic or other locally-activated switch in each notification appliance, a technician can activate one appliance at a time (typically for a brief interval), rather than, as has been the convention, causing all of the appliances on a notification circuit to operate while the technician walks through the building to check that all of the appliances are functioning.

Fierro discloses a test button 56 that is located at interface unit 30 which places the entire system into a test mode. (See column 4, lines 20-34.)

The test switch of the present invention of base Claims 14 and 17 is not at the system controller but rather is at the notification appliance itself for use by a technician during testing and verification of that individual notification appliance. The Examiner has not cited any portion of Fierro that teaches or suggests a test switch located at a notification appliance. Therefore, base Claims 14 and 17 are believed to be patentable over Fierro.

Applicants believe that the claims are not taught or suggested by Fierro and respectfully request reconsideration of the rejection of the claims.

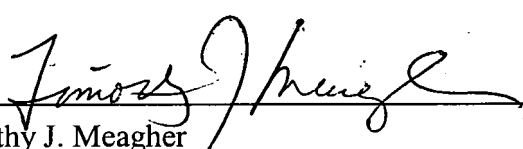
CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that all claims are in condition for allowance, and it is respectfully requested that the application be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (781) 861-6240.

Respectfully submitted,

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